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Would you support a comprehensive adult Medicaid dental benefit that includes access to routine / preventive oral health care?

Yes

2

Please explain your answer.

The lack of dental benefits available to low-income adults in the United States has been referred to as a neglected epidemic. Despite the implementation of the ACA (P.L. 111-148) and the expansion of 28 state Medicaid plans (as of August 2014), some policymakers have neglected the oral health of low-income adults. Its time, we help those who can't help themselves.

3

Recognize and regulate non-dentist oral health providers (for example, support the integration of dental therapists according to HB2235)?

Yes

4

Integration of and provision of oral health services in non-traditional settings (for example, pediatric offices, schools, mobile clinics, etc.).

Yes

5

Empower AHCCCS to better enforce standards regarding access to oral health care.

Yes

6

Please explain your answers.

Tooth decay and gum disease can lead to the yellowing of the teeth, loss of teeth, bad breath and tooth damage. These kinds of cosmetic problems can impact your confidence and make you insecure about your appearance. Regular dental care can prevent much of this damage, and existing damage can usually be repaired

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Oral health is an important part of overall health for both mother and child. Hormonal changes during pregnancy put pregnant women at higher risk for oral health issues. This disparity is exacerbated in low-income women, who may lack access to other key health supports. Research strongly suggests a link between gum disease and poor birth outcomes such as maternal high blood pressure, preterm delivery, and lower birth weight, which in turn increase overall health care costs. At present, low-income women who participate in Arizona's Medicaid program do not have access to comprehensive and affordable oral health care, despite several broadly-supported efforts by the legislature to provide this benefit. Would you support a comprehensive oral health benefit for pregnant women who participate in Medicaid?

Yes

8

Please explain your answer.

Achieving and maintaining good oral health is very important for mothers and their children. Poor oral health of the mother, including dental decay and periodontal disease before and during pregnancy, has been linked to poor birth and pregnancy outcomes such as preterm birth and low birthweight.

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How would you ensure oral health access is a priority in future state budgets?

Work with others regardless of party to ensure this gets done.

What other actions would you take to promote oral health equity in Arizona?

1. Provide Basic Dental Hygiene Tips – Educating patients on basic dental hygiene tips is crucial for their overall health, but it's not always easy to get their attention. On-hold messaging offers the perfect medium for providing patients with these basic dental health tips while they are on hold:

- o Brushing twice a day and flossing daily
- o Scheduling an appointment if they have bleeding gums, which could be a sign of gingivitis
- o Changing their toothbrush every 3-4 months
- o Staying on top of regularly scheduled cleanings

2. Remind Them to Eat a Healthy Diet – Most patients don't understand the role diet can play in their dental health. Using your website, you can share facts, tips, and even infographics to educate patients on the importance of eating foods rich in antioxidants and nutrients like vitamin C that help protect tissues and gums and prevent bacterial infections. The American Dental Association suggests eating foods containing calcium, like almonds and leafy greens, as well as phosphorus-rich foods like eggs and fish to keep enamel healthy.

3. Suggest Rinsing or Chewing Gum After a Meal – If patients don't want to brush or floss after a meal, encourage them to at least rinse (use an antibacterial rinse) or chew sugar-free gum instead. Both only take a few seconds and help wash away bacteria and maintain a healthy acid balance. You can post these and other helpful tips on your social media platforms or your website as well.

4. Encourage Regular Dental Check-Ups – Most experts advise a dental check-up every six months, especially if patients have gingivitis. To help keep them on track with their care and retain appointment revenue, schedule automated appointment reminders to help patients prevent serious oral health issues. Plus, automated appointment reminders are known to reduce no-shows by an average of 25%-30%.

5. Offer Electric Toothbrushes & Flossers – Some patients have difficulty brushing and flossing their teeth. It could be due to a small mouth, arthritis, or other issues. Whatever the case, you can still promote proper cleaning by encouraging patients to use an electric toothbrush or water flosser. And, if your practice sells these products in your office, this is a great opportunity to include that information as part of your on-hold messaging.

Thank you for participating in the survey. To receive a record of your responses please provide your email.

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